REMARKS

Claim 7 is pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 7 has been amended. Support for the amendment to claim 7 can be found at, for example, Fig. 4 and page 7, lines 6-24. No new matter is added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims in view of at least the following remarks.

I. Rejection Under §112, First Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Claim 7 has been amended in view of this objection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

II. Rejection Under §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as having been obvious over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0102843 to Yagi in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,969,468 to Byers et al. (hereinafter "Byers") and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0097166 to Krulevitch et al. (hereinafter "Krulevitch"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yagi fails to disclose and would not have rendered obvious "the electrodes being separately placed so that each electrode individually sticks in the optic papilla," as recited in claim 7. The Office Action asserts that Yagi discloses a plurality of electrodes (11) that output an electrical stimulation pulse signal generated based on the image captured by the image pick up device (visor 4). However, Yagi discloses an electrode unit having a plurality of electrodes (11) that are two-dimensionally arranged and embedded under a retina. Each electrode (11) outputs a stimulation signal to stimulate retinal cells, thereby restoring vision. Specifically, in Yagi, the apparatus with electrodes on the retina generates a stimulation signal from each electrode to stimulate bipolar cells/ganglion cells located near each electrode (paragraphs [0012] and [0054]). Thus, in Yagi, the electrodes are placed on the retina, in

which no blood vessels exist. Yagi does not disclose that the electrodes are individually stick in the optic papilla. Thus, Yagi fails to disclose and would not have rendered obvious "the electrodes being separately placed so that each electrode individually sticks in the optic papilla," as recited in claim 7.

Byers fails to disclose and would not have rendered obvious "the electrodes being separately placed so that each electrode individually sticks in the optic papilla," as recited in claim 7. The Office Action asserts that Byers discloses the use of electrode arrays for stimulating nerve fibers. However, Byers discloses a two-dimensional electrode array having a plurality of fixed electrodes that electrically stimulate a visual cortex of a brain. The technique of Byers is not intended to stimulate nerves by inserting electrodes in the eyeball. Further, Byers does not disclose the sticking of electrodes in the optic papilla of the eye in order to stimulate it. Finally, Byers also fails to disclose a problem with insertion of the electrodes from the optic papilla in with both the optic nerves and the blood vessels exist. Instead, Byers merely discloses that the electrodes are placed on the nerves for treatment and measurement and fails to disclose the use of the electrodes for the purpose of restoring vision. Thus, Byers fails to disclose and would not have rendered obvious "the electrodes being separately placed so that each electrode individually sticks in the optic papilla," as recited in claim 7.

Krulevitch fails to disclose and would not have rendered obvious "the electrodes being separately placed so that each electrode individually sticks in the optic papilla," as recited in claim 7. The Office Action asserts that Krulevitch discloses an electrode array that can be used for artificial vision. However, Krulevitch discloses an electrode array (20) that is placed on the skin or is attached to other tissue surfaces. Krulevitch fails to disclose that the electrode array (20) can be stuck in the optic papilla. Thus, Krulevitch fails to disclose and

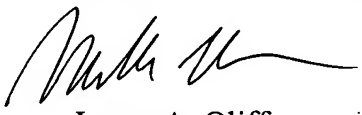
would not have rendered obvious "the electrodes being separately placed so that each electrode individually sticks in the optic papilla," as recited in claim 7.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claim are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Michelle K. Windom
Registration No. 65,466

JAO:MQW/eks

Date: October 22, 2010

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION
Please grant any extension necessary for entry of this filing; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461